

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

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FOR AMBASSADOR WELLS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM COLOMBO DATED AUGUST 9, 1977 SENT
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO SINGAPORE, USUN NEW YORK, GENEVA IS RE-
PEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COLOMBO 2889

SINGAPORE FOR AMBASSADOR WRIGGINS; GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR WELLS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, OEXC, CE

SUBJ: CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: STATE 176164

1. CHARGE PAID FIRST COURTESY CALL ON NEW FOREIGN MINISTER
A.C.S. HAMEED ON AUGUST 8. FOLLOWING POINTS EMERGED:

2. HAMEED WELCOMES WELLS-PETREE VISIT, ENVISAGES BEGINNING
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MORNING OF AUGUST 24 BY HIS MEETING WITH THEM, AND CLOSING IN
SAME FASHION, WITH SEPARATE WORKING LEVEL MEETINGS WITH OTHER
GSL OFFICIALS DURING THE DAY.

3. HE LOOKS FORWARD GREATLY TO ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR WRIGGINS,
WHOM HE DOES NOT BELIEVE HE HAS PREVIOUSLY MET. HE MADE POINT
OF SAYING THAT WRIGGINS PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS CEREMONY,

WHEN SCHEDULED, WILL BE HAMEED'S FIRST SUCH CEREMONY. THIS IS INTERESTING, BECAUSE PRIOR TO HAMEED APPOINTMENT, FOREIGN MINISTER POSITION HAS ALWAYS BEEN HELD BY PRIME MINISTER, WHO NEVER ATTENDED CREDENTIALS CEREMONIES. SO IT WILL BE A FIRST IN MORE THAN ONE WAY. ALTHOUGH SEVERAL NEW AMBASSADORS ARE IN THE WORKS, DO NOT BELIEVE ANY WILL ARRIVE IN TIME TO CONTEST HONOR OF BEING FIRST.

4. HAMEED WILL LEAD SRI LANKA DEL TO UNGA, BUT HAS NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER HE WILL ATTEND ADJOURNED 31ST UNGA BEFORE OPENING OF 32ND UNGA. MFA IS JUST GETTING AROUND TO STUDYING AGENDAS. WELLS-PETREE VISIT WILL THEREFORE BE MOST TIMELY. HE WOULD OF COURSE WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH SECRETARY VANCE, AND PROMISED TO KEEP EMBASSY INFORMED OF HIS TRAVEL PLANS. NEW, VERY YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, RANIL WICKREMASINGHE, WILL NOT GO TO NEW YORK, BUT WILL MIND THE SHOP HERE FOR HAMEED.

5. HE EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE GRATITUDE FOR OFFER OF SLOT IN BROOKINGS INSTITUTE SEMINAR ON NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS (COLOMBO 2741) AND PROMISED EARLY DECISION ON SRI LANKAN CANDIDATE. (GSL MAY PROPOSE TWO.)

6. HE MADE GENERAL PLEA FOR UNDERSTANDING OF U.S. AND OTHER FRIENDS OF SRI LANKA, AS NEW GOVERNMENT, DESPITE OVERWHELMING ELECTORAL MAJORITY, FACES "UPHILL STRUGGLE" IN ATTEMPTING TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEET ITS MANY PROBLEMS. CHARGE MADE STANDARD REPLY THAT THE ELECTION, CARRIED OUT IN MOST DEMOCRATIC MANNER AND COMING ON HEELS OF A SIMILAR EXPRESSION OF POPULAR WILL IN INDIA, HAD MADE A DEEP IMPRESSION IN THE U.S., WHICH WOULD FOLLOW EFFORTS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT WITH CONSIDERABLE SYMPATHY. IN SIDE BANTER, AFTER CHARGE EXPRESSED REGRET AT NOT BEING PERSONALLY AS WELL ACQUAINTED WITH NEW GSL TEAM AS HE SHOULD BE, HAMEED REPLIED WITH CHUCKLE THAT POPULAR CONCEPTION WAS THE U.S. KNEW UNP VERY WELL. BOTH AGREED THAT AN 83 PERCENT MAJORITY IN NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY COULD HARDLY BE ATTRIBUTED BY THE MOST PREJUDICED TO OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE WITH THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

7. HAMEED IS A SHORT, VERY SOFT SPOKEN MAN, TO EXTENT THAT ONE SOMETIMES HAS TO LEAN FORWARD TO CATCH HIS WORDS, HOWEVER SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY THEY ARE ENUNCIATED. HE EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE REGRET AT THE DEPARTURE OF SO MANY OFFICERS FROM THIS EMBASSY IN SHORT SPACE OF TIME, PAYING PARTICULAR TRIBUTE TO FSO DON CAMP, WHOM HE CONSIDERED A SPECIAL PERSONAL FRIEND. PERKINS UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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